

Chapter 1
What Is Sexual Enlightenment?



*Evolution is evolving from unconscious
chance to conscious choice.*

—Barbara Marx Hubbard, *Birth 2012 and Beyond*

“Sexual enlightenment”? The term isn’t well known, nor is it something that has been developed traditionally. In our work, we consider sexual enlightenment to be distinguished by two dimensions. The first involves sexual life-force energy, which brings forth life in all that is alive—human beings, animals, and plants. This energy is at the core of universal consciousness and was around long before we became aware of ourselves, long before the discovery of $E=mc^2$. It’s a built-in knowingness given by nature, the Divine, or the eternal consciousness. Sexual life-force energy is the spark of creation that got us here.

The second dimension of sexual enlightenment involves the human capacity to be self-reflective or aware of one’s own existence, particularly becoming aware and conscious of one’s life-force energy that is sexual in nature, which allows for integrating one’s sexual, emotional, and spiritual being. In contrast to animals, who follow their procreative wiring when “in heat,” human beings have the potential to bring awareness and consciousness to their sexual selves—their feelings, thoughts,

sensations, and behaviors—which can create the opportunity to be at choice regarding the use of their life-force or sexual energy.

Therefore, as reflective humans, we can develop the capacity to bring awareness to the spark of life within us and use this not only in sexual acts but also to create our whole lives—a possibility we explore in further depth in the course of this book. We are particularly interested in bringing to light the manifestation of sexual energy for the sake of conscious and joyous creation of our lives, relationships, careers, and communities.

Thus, sexual enlightenment entails becoming conscious of our life-force sexual energy and tapping into creativity and pleasure—the built-in key aspects of that life-giving spark—as a conduit to greater fulfillment in life and love.

Human Energy

As we learned in our physics and chemistry classes in school, energy can take many forms:

- Electrical energy lights up the sky during thunderstorms and illuminates our homes at night.
- Kinetic energy sends a ball flying through the air when we hit it with a bat.
- Chemical energy drives our bodies' systems and keeps us moving physically.
- Thermal energy can heat our houses and the food we eat.

However, absent from high school and college curriculums is “human energy” as it manifests in our bodies and consciousness. Human life-force energy is sexual in nature (though we are not talking here about traditional sex education) and encompasses a range of states from subtle to intensely aroused. We become aware of this energy when it shows up in procreation, when we are having sex, but it can also be much vaster than—and just as potent—as what we experience during sex. It can be used to create whatever we want to bring into our lives such as good health, well-being, fulfilling relationships, aspirations, and careers.

The sex act is one way of experiencing and using sexual energy but not the only way; intercourse is one stage in the continuum of experiencing sexual energy. Without sexual energy, none of us would be here. It is fundamental not just to human existence but to all of life as we know it and has been present since the very dawn of creation. We will build on this further in chapter 2.

Though we cannot see it, life force sexual energy is ever-present when we are aroused in the bedroom as well as when we are at rest and sex is the furthest thing from our minds—and every state in between. It's even there when we're doing mundane tasks like cooking dinner or getting dressed in the morning.

Sexual energy in its physical manifestation and experience is unique in that it's creative and pleasurable. This allows for the continuing existence of life, which is part of us by nature. We can learn to draw on this awareness of creativity and pleasure, similar to when we're in a loving space or viewing a work of art or in anything we regularly find joy. Our contention is that *when life force sexual energy is unencumbered and free of past personal stories and collective interpretations that no longer serve us, creativity and pleasure are more accessible to us everywhere in life*. It is present where we live, in the people we surround ourselves with, and in the work we do. When we learn sexual consciousness practices, creativity and pleasure start showing up as a default way of being in the simple process of living.

Becoming the Observer

Sexual enlightenment begins when we bring intention and focused attention to our life-force sexual energy. Unlike animals that work simply on biological imperatives to keep their kind from becoming extinct, we have the ability to become the observer of our desires, impulses, wants, fears, and joys. Of course we're wired in that biological dimension as well; in the big picture we're animals ourselves, and it's our inherent mission to continue to thrive generation after generation. In this dimension of sexual energy, we are *machines*—it doesn't require consciousness on

our part. It's automatic and just happens whether we're aware of it or not.

What separates us from the beasts, then, is the second dimension of bringing consciousness to sexual energy: our ability to be self-reflective or aware of our own existence, what we call "the observer of the self." This uniquely human capacity allows us to rise above the biological miracle of ourselves and recognize that we are at choice in how we live, feel, and act, including our sexual beingness.

Being "at choice" means we are able to see what is versus what we think should be. This allows us to become clear about what we truly want and take effective action toward fulfilling it. When we are aware of being at choice regarding our sexual beingness, we can tap into and use our sexual energy in a multitude of ways, depending on what we want to create in our lives and relationships. We can use it in the sex act. We can connect with our sacredness and deepen the intimate connection with our beloved. We can integrate our sexual, emotional, and spiritual being. We can use it to fuel our work creatively or connect consciously with the people around us.

Developing this state of mind is essential to working with sexual energy, to tapping in to it and utilizing it to create fulfilling lives. *Without the observer mind, we can be doomed to an eternity of automatic and habitual behaviors that often produce suffering and a sense of being victimized by life.* In other words, we live devoid of creativity and pleasure.

To illustrate the "observer mind," let's look at a moose walking through a forest, just going along her merry way. Then suddenly a big tree falls right in front of her. The moose looks at the tree, lifts her nose to smell it, and then nibbles on the tree's twigs and leaves. As she eats, rain starts to fall. The moose raises her head, enjoying and tasting the drops that fall on her face. When she's had her fill, she simply finds her way around the fallen tree and continues on her journey.

Now say a human is walking through the forest when suddenly a big tree falls right in front of him. He'll look angrily at the tree, cursing and huffing, "Now I'm going to be late for

my meeting. And what about my wife and children and my retirement fund? I have to make a bridge to get where I need to go! What? It's raining *too*?" Throwing his hands up in despair and disgust, he'll exclaim, "Why me, God? Why me?"

Becoming like the moose allows us to be in the present moment, witness what is, notice how we feel, and watch the chatter, thoughts, and interpretations in our mind. As humans we are programmed to dwell on the drama that's already passed instead of focusing on the present. Instead of getting caught up in the chatter of the mind, we can cultivate our capacity to be like the moose—simply be with what is happening right here and now. In this witness or observer state, we are connected with ourselves and tap into stillness and peace, and that's the space where intimacy and consequently sexual enlightenment arise.

Getting Enlightened

Sexual enlightenment gives people a glimpse through the doorway to their own power. When people come to our TantraNova workshops, they arrive with wishes, desires, and intentions for things they want to work on, for what they want to change, improve on, or expand into. In the work we do, we have led many to begin to see richer ways to live and coached them to move toward fulfilling their dreams and hopes. This all starts with becoming sexually enlightened through the conscious integration of one's sexual, emotional, and spiritual self.

Moving toward sexual enlightenment requires skill building in three areas:

1. Conscious breathing
2. Meditation – the observer state of mind
3. Energy awareness, both non-aroused and aroused

Conscious Breathing

Breath is the essence of life. From our first moment fresh from the womb until the last sigh of death, we are breathing. Most of

the time, we breathe reflexively without thinking, inhaling and exhaling our way through morning routines; work, car, or train rides, exercise, and sleep.

Using breath consciously as a tool is the first step to entering the mindful world of sexual energy. When we are present with our breath, we can reach a place of focus, stillness, and inner peace that allows us to go deeper into ourselves and our experiences. Particularly breathing into the expansion of the abdomen, called the belly breath, allows for activating the parasympathetic or involuntary nervous system. This slows down the heartbeat, relaxes the muscles, and makes us feel good. We drop out of the head and into the body.

Using conscious breathing practices enables us to calm the incessant chatter of the mind and become witnesses to our thoughts, feelings, and sensations. When we are in this place of observing ourselves, we stop being stuck in our feelings, desires, and automatic wiring and instead witness *what's running us*.

Meditation

Calming the chatter in the mind is at the core of bringing focus and attention to sexual energy. If we cannot be present with ourselves, how can we be present with one another?

Many meditation practices lead to the same intended outcome: *being able to be present and at peace with what is*. These practices can be active, passive, social, or sexual in nature. Sexual meditation is powerful because it helps us become physically, chemically, emotionally, and spiritually connected, loving, and vulnerable. It can show up in various manifestations in the body, heart, and mind:

Physically: your heart rate increases; you feel more sensitive and aware; you may have a warm, supple sensation.

Chemically: oxytocin and endorphins are enhanced, resulting in deeper relaxation and calmness and decreased pain or discomfort.

Emotionally: you feel more content, open, receptive, joyous, and trusting.

Spiritually: you experience a sense of being connected with yourself and the universe.

Sexual meditation is probably the most difficult form of meditation to master because we are so used to getting completely swept up in the excitement and drama of sex. Nothing is wrong with excitement and drama, yet to become sexually enlightened you want to learn how to move beyond them and become conscious of non-aroused and aroused energy. Doing this requires willingness and practice.

Meditation allows for a magnified accessibility to what may unconsciously run us so we can become aware, be at choice, and shift what we want to shift in ourselves and our relationships. *We can become more aware of where we are regarding sexual energy as it relates to fear, guilt, embarrassment, and shame—all the factors that often weigh us down and keep us from attaining what we want in life.* When we can consciously access our sexual energy, we can transform these blocks or constrictions and move toward fuller expression of ourselves.

Energy Awareness

Sexual energy as a conscious source of creativity and pleasure is only available once we engage in becoming aware of and attuned to life-force energy running through our physical bodies at all times, like a current through a wire. When we can bring awareness to that flow, we can start channeling it. This is not rocket science, but it requires focused practice that will lead to being able to channel aroused sexual energy at a more advanced state, bringing greater consciousness to oneself and deeper fulfillment to one's relationships.

Just as the yoga we primarily practice in the West focuses on the physical body, Tantra yoga and the TantraNova approach focus on the energetic body. To distinguish the energetic body

we draw on energy fields based in the system of the chakras (see chapter 5 for further explanation) and the interconnected flow of energy up and down the spine (also called *Kundalini* in Sanskrit).

One important step in the process of moving toward a state of sexual enlightenment is the integration of these energy fields, which results in a sense of wholeness. When we are in a state of integration, we don't experience any blocks or constrictions in the energy flow within our body. Life-force energy can move freely from one center to another, keeping us in balance in body, heart, and mind. In this state we are at peace and so better able not just to live fulfilling lives but really to discover—or uncover—who we are.